

**Gorge Dam Removal Joint Meeting
Local Stakeholders Committee / USEPA; Phase II Team**

Notes October 24, 2018

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Mingo Lodge, Sand Run Parkway, Akron, OH 44333

Attendees

Local Stakeholder: Chris Ludle, Heather Ullinger, Heather Bolestridge, Bill Zawiski, Mandy Rassanno, Connie Kraus, Tony Demasi, Lisa King, Mike Johnson, Stephanie Walton, Chuck Hauber, Nick Moskos, Elaine Marsh, Megan Shaffer

USEPA Team: Marybeth Giancarlo, Karla Auker;

Jacobs Team: Julie Schucker, Tom Leigh, Mary Reif, Mark Kacmarcik, Gina Bayer

Introductions: Attendees introduced themselves and the role of their agencies play in the dam removal process and in Phase II.

Local members not in attendance with regrets: Doug Hartman, FirstEnergy Corp; Mayor Don Walters, City of Cuyahoga Falls; Frank LaRose, Senator, 27th District, State of Ohio; Pat Gsellman, City of Akron (attended the morning)

Note: Contact Lists for all members and 10/24 attendees attached

Review of the Morning

USEPA and Jacobs team discussed their review of the sites visited. Issues related to needed studies were the primary objective of the visit.

The Dam Site

1. The possible need for partial lowering of the dam pool.
2. Determining the final plans for the dam, i.e. partial removal, maintaining a small portion of the dam for interpretation, complete removal, etc.
3. Determining the total amount of dam removal debris. (FirstEnergy's library was suggested a possible source of information related to the total amount of construction materials, both from the original construction and from the 1970's reinforcements.)
4. Determining dam ownership.

The Sediment Site

1. Determining SMP's and City Akron's future use of the deposit site. The quality and quantity of the sediment deposit will determine the viability of all plans.
2. SMP will determine future use as the process continues. Alternatives could be identified ahead of time.
3. City of Akron has sewers in the area; studies will need to identify if they can withstand the anticipated weight of the sediment.
4. City of Akron's future plans for sewer development need to be determined. Akron will send drawings and plans for the alternatives at and near the site, including a potential CSO tunnel.
5. Determining if and how the sediments will need to be treated related to potential leaching.
6. Determining if dirt will need to be hauled off site.
7. City of Akron currently has items stored on site. The final destination of these items will need to be determined.
8. Determining the calendar for when planning elements to be completed.

9. Determining the calendar for sediment management.

Jacobs will set up a share point for the teams to follow the progress on the studies of Phase II.

The Phased Process of Dam Removal

US EPA Sediment Studies: Conducted by US EPA. Completed 2009, 2011; Report: April 2012

Phase I: Conducted by Ohio EPA. Cost estimate of alternatives to sediment management and dam deconstruction: Report: September 2015.

Phase II: Conducted by US EPA through contract with Jacobs. Study and Design of Sediment Management. Legacy Act Program of the GLRI will fund up to 65% of the cost. Local match obtained through a grant from ODNR through a capital appropriation from the State of Ohio. This phase will consist of filling data gaps and designing the process of sediment management.

Phase III: If accepted, this phase would be conducted by US EPA through a contract with a prequalified contractor, possibly feasibly through the Legacy Act of the GLRI. Local match to be determined. This phase will manage the sediment.

Phase IV: Deconstruction and restoration of the dam structure and surrounding area. Funding will need to be determined. Several federal and state funds may be available.

Issues Moving Forward

The design must be coordinated and sequenced through the entire project.

While 2024 has been established as the completion date for AOC projects on the Cuyahoga, that date may not be firm and fast depending on US EPA priorities.

Ohio EPA and US EPA will coordinate the phasing of funding.

The type of contract for sediment management and dam deconstruction was discussed. Several local members suggested design-build as a potential structure.

Permits will need to be identified. The need for some permits is unknown. For example, it is unknown if the hydro operation was ever permitted.

The future funding for GLRI is critical to the funding for the sediment removal process. Local stakeholders are committed to providing continuing support for the GLRI. This effort will include involving state and federal legislators in the process.

How to deal with the concrete debris from the dam will need to be determined. Recycling is considered the best use if demand can accommodate it. Souvenirs and materials for local artisans were also suggested as a less significant use.

The data gap studies could take up to 18 months. The remaining design calendar will be dependent on the result of the studies.

Coordinating Local, US EPA and Jacobs Endeavors

Coordinating the efforts of US EPA, Jacobs and Local Stakeholders was identified as a desirable effort. US EPA and Jacobs identified local knowledge related to history, use and planning as significant contributions to the overall design.

Local Stakeholders committed to making information and requested assistance available to the Phase II team. Bill Zawiski reminded all local stakeholders that any participation, including local efforts, would be available as match to the project.

US EPA and Jacobs wish to be informed of all stakeholder meetings. They believe having telephone options for participating at the meetings would be needed. Elaine Marsh will contact Caitlin Nigrelli for the phone access. Next meeting is December 13 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, location to be determined.

Public Involvement

A working group has been setup to coordinate public involvement. (List attached). Stephanie Walton will coordinate the group. Elaine Marsh will facilitate and record. A list of the Working Group is attached. Suggestions for additional members included River Network and Ohio Environmental Council.

Possible projects were discussed:

Working together on public meetings. Jacobs announced that they may have a preliminary report on data gaps by October. This was suggested as good time for a joint public meeting. The local Stakeholders' may have a meeting in the spring concerning other topics. In addition to public meetings on the design process, meeting(s) will be required for the 106 process. Further planning on public meetings will be a topic for the working group and at the next Stakeholder meeting on December 13.

Working together on messaging. All Gorge Dam related websites, printed materials (like a brochure) and videos should have common themes and messages.

Products: The need for a Phase II brochure, and a video describing benefits of dam removal were discussed as possible projects. Also discussed was the possibility of artist renderings, photoshopped views and videos of post-dam-removal visual interpretations.

Expanding publicity networks. These networks could be employed to publicize public meetings, coordinate news releases, clarify scientific information and build public support.

Determining informational needs of the public. Coordinating the avenues and sequencing of publicity will be a primary role of the working group.

Developing materials needed to expand support. While much support has been generated by local Stakeholders, new officials have been elected in various local, state and federal positions. The working group could determine from which jurisdictions letters of support need to be generated and develop materials to obtain that support.

Holding some event to celebrate the 50th anniversary. Local stakeholders are investigating an event for a general celebration in the Akron/Summit County area. A specific dam event could be setup in conjunction with the local celebration. Alternatively, a stand-alone event could be held.

Next Meeting: December 13, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Place to be determined. Phone access will be available; information distributed at a future date.

Notes drafted by Elaine Marsh, Watershed Specialist, Summit Metro Parks .

Please direct questions and comments to: [[HYPERLINK "mailto:emarsh@summitmetroparks.org"](mailto:emarsh@summitmetroparks.org)] or (330)328-3909.